

New York Tribune

Weekly Review of the Arts

The Stage and Its People

SUNDAY, MAY 14, 1922



Margaret Wycherly and Charles Dalton in the Theater Guild's production of Arnold Bennett's play, "What the Public Wants." At the moment of our sketch Mr. Dalton, as Sir Charles Worgan, a yellow newspaper publisher, is clumsily proposing to Miss Wycherly, who plays Emily Vernon, an actress who can't act. In "The Hairy Ape" the sinister rumble of the ship's engines accentuates the strain of the earlier scenes. The publisher's proposal in the Theater Guild play might well be supplemented to romantic advantage by the clatter of the presses below. The office boys in the above sketch really aren't in the play—just another suggestion of ours for realism.



Those in the above group are principally chorus girls from "Go Easy, Mabel," a musical comedy co-starring Ethel Levey and A. Bathroom. The chorus is made up of the prettiest girls in New York, according to the program, and consequently we asked for a front row seat. The above sketches are the nervous result. Sitting in and on the bathtub are Ethel Levey and Arthur Aylesworth, who make the plot risqué by hiding in the bathroom. The audience doesn't see the bathtub scene, but we are acquainted with the Longacre Theater plumber, and he described it to us. At lower right is an impression of Estelle Winwood, who talks her songs.



Byron Beasley as Thaddeus Knox, transcontinental railroad president from Omaha, in "The Advertising of Kate." Some of our best friends are Omaha millionaires, and we never saw one who wore checkered pants at a house party.

The Theaters

By Percy Hammond

MR. H. L. MENCKEN, telling a young essayist how to be successful not long ago, advised him to write in advocacy of unpopular causes. His prescription for happiness in letters was, at that time, a rule of conduct involving enthusiasm for the things most generally abhorred.

Be for the Turks, said he, and against the bleeding Armenians. Announce with ardor that Chicago, the Caliban of culture, is Ariel in matters of sweetness and light. It is well also, Mr. Mencken continued, to pool-pool the Grand Canyon as merely an accidental excavation and to accuse the sunsets of being gaudy. One should refer to the sea, as Henry James did, as but a dull inundation; and to speak in doubt of Messrs. Reed and Borah as defiant patriots and deep-thinking legislators. To be provocative, Mr. Mencken inferred, is the secret of celebrity, and celebrity is the secret, to many, of happiness. Prove me, Mr. Mencken counseled; and in case he does not recall the occasion of his oracles I shall be glad to identify it for him. I have rouged his observations only a trifle.

What under dog, one wonders, can one pet this forenoon, following Mr. Mencken's sagacious instructions? Or what accepted stupendous figure can one belittle? "The Cat and the Canary" suggests itself as ripe grapes for the latter device. A mud pie of the drama, it amuses those who go to the theater to renew their babyhood. Shall we adults stay away? By no means, for we have Mr. Mencken's good time, do we not, in deprecating, as we watch its infant frolics, its prosperous fame as an established institution. On the other hand, here is Mr. Alexander Carr, downtrodden in "Partners Again," whose performances as Mawruss Perlmutter the routine reviewers have heretofore deprived of encomium.

Mr. Carr's function in "Partners Again" is sacrificial. He is assigned to the role of the less scrupulous of the companionship, the snarling, venomous, hostile contrast to Mr. Bernard's engaging Jew. Patiently, more or less, he feeds the omnivorous Potash with opportunities, and is as much ignored in so doing as the fish trainer who throws sardines to a seal. He is as essential to the entertainment as Mr. Bernard is, for he is the inhospitable background against which Mr. Bernard exhibits his humorous benightedness. Neither one has been prosperous without the other. It is pretty well known that Mr. Carr's regard for Mr. Bernard is measurable. I trust I violate no confidence in stating that his love for his associate is not as hot, for instance, as the lava flood that boils in Aetna's breast of flame. I am told on reliable authority that neither, unless it were absolutely necessary, would cut off his right arm for the other.

How noble is it, then, for Mr. Carr to do half of the work, and to be content with but a small percentage of the kudos. I am pleased to know that this time Mr. Carr is more mellow than he has been hitherto as Perlmutter, and that he modifies his previous angry disregard for Potash with an acid forbearance. Now he is an amusing, big-hearted, quick-tempered expedient, pugnacious and irritable Jewish business man, upright in friendships' crises, and almost as tricky as the angelic Abe. Where he used to be aspic he is now more peevish, and his frowns and epithets are emblematic of irritation rather than of malignity. Mr. Bernard's acting as Potash is more than plausible speech and gesture. It is imagination and analysis, brought together by that potent though despised instrument of characterization, the gift of mimetics. Mr. Bernard builds Potash in his mind, examines the details of the character and reproduces them in photographic imitation. The soul of Potash may have no baffling depths, but it is plumbed by Mr. Bernard; and his achievement is one of the occasional instances wherein acting is an art, as well as a knack. The play this time is not only funnier as to lines and situation than its predecessors in the series; it is a smoothly moving, well oiled, well cast machine, which they were not. The only possible objections to "Partners Again" as a major "show" are that its events as well as its characters are stereo, and that in the company there are three young men so similar in appearance and behavior that it is difficult to identify them one from the others. Mr. Glass is more than an efficient apothecary of the theater. He puts savory character, observation, and legitimate humor into the stock-pot of popular shows, which is more than some of his confreres do.

Grand Giggle Opens Tuesday

The Grand Giggle, the Street Fair Theater, which will be managed by Mrs. Lydia Hoyt, will open Tuesday afternoon on Park Avenue. The Street Fair is a benefit to raise funds for the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children. Two performances a day will be given during the continuance of the fair. Irene Bordoni, the Duncan Sisters, Frances White, Mabel Stryker, Marion Green, De-

Wolf Hopper, Raymond Hitchcock, Tom Lewis, the "Shuffle Along" company, Margaret Severn, Harry Brown, Gilda Gray, Gitz Rice and Hal Lord are among those who are to appear.

Ruth Will Give Dance Recital

Ruth, of the Helen Moller Dancers, will appear in a recital of Greek dances at Helen Moller's Little Theater for the Greek Dance, at the Lexington Theater, on Tuesday evening, at 9 o'clock.

The Playbill

New Theatrical Offerings

MONDAY—At the Belmont Theater Richard G. Herndon will present Grant Mitchell in "Kempy," a comedy by J. C. Nugent and Elliott Nugent. The authors, as well as Lotus Robb, Helen Carew, Ruth Nugent, Jessie Cromette and Robert Lee Allen, will support Mr. Mitchell. Augustin Duncan directed the production.

"Kempy" is described as a contemporary comedy of American life. Mr. Mitchell plays the part of a successful business man with an abundance of assurance and common sense.

unit on the Shubert vaudeville circuit next season. . . . After the close of her tour in "Déclassée" ETHEL BARRYMORE will take a short vacation and then appear in vaudeville. . . . One learns that MAX MARCIN plans to produce four plays next season and that he will try some of them out during the summer. He is to put on "The Faithful Heart," by MONCKTON HOF, in association with FREDERICK STANHOPE, with GODFREY TEARLE in the leading rôle; "Give and Take," by AARON HOFFMAN; "Home Again," by GUY BOLTON, and one other play. . . . According to reports along Broadway, DAVID H. WALLACE, who has been associated with WILLIAM HARRIS JR. and W. A. BRADY, will join the producing ranks next season. . . . "La Tendresse," which was produced in Paris at the Theatre Vaudeville a year ago, has been obtained for American production by HENRY MILLER. It is by HENRI BATAILLE. . . . ELEANOR PAINTER is to appear in "The Lady in Ermine," a new opera, in the fall. Since it was announced recently that Miss Painter would head the cast of the next production at the Century Theater it appears that "The Lady in Ermine" is to be the production. . . . GELETT BURGESS' musical comedy is entitled "The Purple Cow." . . . EUGENE WALTER, who has been vacationing in New England, is going to Canada to write. . . . MARTIN HERMAN is thinking of taking the boat trip through the Panama Canal to Los Angeles, leaving New York on the 27th of this month. . . . "Sue Dear," BIDE DUDLEY'S musical comedy, has closed and will be recast and, in part, rewritten. . . . The producers of "The Bat" are looking ahead. Besides announcing an extra matinee for Memorial Day, they have also arranged for a Fourth of July matinee. This will be the second Memorial Day matinee and the second Fourth of July matinee for the mystery play leader. . . . An unusually small number of spring try-outs are being made this year, and a record number of well-known actors and actresses are jumping at the opportunity to take stock engagements for the summer. . . .

Every Man in His Own Humor

Dear Sir: My wife and I were so charmed with "Dulcy," which we saw several times, that when it was announced "To the Ladies" was written by the same playwrights we visited the Liberty Theater anticipating seeing a play equal to their former effort.

Being a business man, and not a tired one, at that, I was surprised at the exaggerated acting of the leading man, who, in my opinion, not only could not have obtained a job with any reputable firm, but could not have held a responsible position even for a day. His grotesque gestures, facial expression and general demeanor could not fail to impress a business man most unfavorably. I admit he got some laughs, but they seemed to me very forced, and I do not believe that those who laughed ever gave thought to the fact that such an individual as he portrays could, under no circumstances, get or hold the position of secretary to a business man.

I am very curious to know why he does not play the part straight, that is, without an attempt at caricaturing. I did enjoy the second act, the banquet scene, as the acting, as a whole, was good. There again, in my opinion, the leading man overdid the part where he loses a portion of his speech.

Why is it that this fault seems to be common in many actors in the plays of nowadays? Is it that they regard most of the New York theatergoing people as from the provinces, where it may be necessary to exaggerate in order to carry across the good points?

Perhaps Mr. Kruger in an interview might care to explain his rendition.

THEATERGOER.

'The Fatal Marriage' Coming, With Gish and Reid

Lillian Gish and Wallace Reid will be seen in "The Fatal Marriage," a screen adaptation of Tennyson's poem "Enoch Arden." R.C. will revive this picture and will issue it in the near future. It was made under the supervision of D. W. Griffith and was directed by William Christy Cabanne. Miss Gish is seen as Annie Lee, the village belle. Wallace Reid is Philip Ray, and Walter Paget is Enoch Arden. The picture is said to follow closely the story told in Tennyson's poem.

New Star for New R.C.

Jane Novak has signed a contract with P. A. Powers and the new Robertson-Cole organization for five special productions. Chester Bennett is producer and director. The first picture will be "The Snowshoe Trail."

The London Stage

By Warre B. Wells

LONDON, April 28.

TO TRY to steal one another's thunder seems to be getting quite a fashionable pastime with English playwrights. Recently Sir Arthur Pinero, in his play "The Enchanted Cottage," tried his hand at writing a play somewhat after the manner of Sir James Barrie. It did not prove a success, and was withdrawn after a few weeks' run. Now John Galsworthy, one of the two or three finest dramatic craftsmen of the day, has tried out the experiment of writing a play, not in his own distinctive manner, but after the comparatively-trivial fashion of Bernard Shaw, with some flavoring of Oscar Wilde.

The play, entitled "Windows," was produced this week at the Court Theater, where there is now running a cycle of Galsworthy plays. It challenges comparison not only with these but with its immediate predecessor, "Loyalties," now making a successful run at the St. Martin's Theater, in which he set himself a rigorous standard of incisive social criticism and adroit dramatic technique in which "Windows" falls very far behind.

The vein in which Galsworthy's new play is written is unwisely chosen, the more so as the theme, a profoundly human one, should be peculiarly his own. It is the theme of the girl-mother. The heroine has smothered her illegitimate baby and has served two years in prison for the crime. Her case is clearly based on that of an actual parallel, which some months ago made some stir in the English press. In this case the mother is serving a life sentence for the murder of her child and a London Sunday newspaper conducted a strong campaign for her release, which is expected at any moment. A Sunday paper is, in fact, referred to in the play.

John Galsworthy, who has to his credit the accomplishment of his playwriting of important reforms in the prison code, had here a congenial theme in illustrating the blighting effect of prison treatment on the maternal temperament. But in "Windows" it seems rather that he has picked his subject out of the newspapers and forced a play on top of it than that the play had forced itself upon his consciousness with the inevitability of art. And a subject perfectly suited to his sympathetic pen—as that pen is usually welded—is here subordinated to feeble humor and hazy symbolism.

"Windows" is described by the author as "a play for idealists and others." There are windows all around us, but mostly you can't see through them. Either they want cleaning or the glass is too thick. And the windows of idealists are the most obscured of all. That seems to be the moral of the play so far as there is one. When the play opens Faith Bly, the girl-mother (Mary Odette) has served her sentence and has been engaged as a domestic servant in the house of Geoffrey March, a Highgate novelist. We are shown the family into which she is taken, the kindly father, with ideals (Herbert Marshall), the sympathetic son, also with ideals (John Howell), the mother (Irene Rooke), a little doubtful of the outcome of the experiment.

They try to do their best for her; they are kind to her, but she wants "life," not kindness. She makes eyes at the son and the son kisses her (she is very pretty, and his will to save a soul blends with his inability to refuse a kiss), and the mother decides that she must leave the house. The son camps outside her door to prevent her from leaving, but finally, after an unsuccessful attempt by a bully who has tracked her down, she does leave of her own accord—to what? Despairingly and defiantly, as she leaves the house, she says: "There's nothing in me."

All this to the accompaniment of comment in the vein of chorus from the girl's father (Ernest Thesiger), a window cleaner—symbolically as well as actually—with a taste for Hegel, who is, however, very much of a "character part," drawn in for discourse sake rather than organically related to the story. The play was well acted; Mary Odette in particular, an actress whom film work has taught to make every glance and movement eloquent, perfectly caught the moods of the problem servant. But the reception of the play was polite rather than enthusiastic. "The wise want love and those who love want wisdom"—playgoers have rightly come to expect something better than this sort of aphorism as answer to the questions which Galsworthy poses. And "Windows," considered as pure playwriting, is less well handled than anything he has staged for some considerable time. Certainly the play is not in the same dramatic street as "Loyalties"; it seems, presented as it is in a cycle of his plays, rather a throw-back to his earlier and more uncertain period.

N. V. A. Benefit Program To-night Includes 75 Stars

For a benefit to yield more than \$100,000 is a seeming impossibility, but the National Vaudeville Artists' annual benefit at the Hippodrome and Manhattan Opera House to-night will turn in much more than that amount. Tickets are sold all over the United States to vaudeville artists and managers and their friends and business associates. These tickets can be exchanged at the box office for seats, but only a small percentage appear in New York, so the houses can be sold over and over again. As a matter of fact, the audience is made up of New Yorkers who have bought their seats direct at the box office, but if all the ticket holders should ever turn up from around the country it would take a half dozen Hippodromes and Manhattan Opera Houses to hold them. Another source of revenue is the program, which is swollen by advertisements to the dimensions of a telephone directory. The income from this source will be more than \$30,000.

The National Vaudeville Artists will present seventy-five acts at each house. The artists will travel back and forth on a special auto transfer system. Each star and headliner will play both houses in turn.

"Across the Rainbow" To Open Wednesday

The new Mary Carr picture, "Across the Rainbow," will open at the Apollo Theater Wednesday night. Mrs. Carr and her six children will appear in person the opening night.

New Picture for Williams

Earle Williams has begun a new picture for Vitagraph. It is founded on a story in "Cabbages and Kings" by O. Henry.